

## **Interview with Daphne Urbanska**

### **widow of Marek Urbanski, son of Alfred Urbański**

Thank you for finding the time to talk to me about your father-in-law, Alfred Urbański Prime Minister of Poland in Exile 1972-1976 as you knew him personally, and as there is little information about him I would like to know what kind of person he was.

I first met him soon after I met Marek and he took me home to meet his parents. They were very welcoming and hospitable towards me, as I later discovered, as are most Polish people, keeping their traditions although living in a foreign country.

His father was very much involved with the Polish Exile Government and although he was no longer Prime Minister by then, he continued going to meetings regularly and helping people. I remember him explaining that he often went to translate for Polish people who had to appear in court, using his background as a lawyer although he was unable to practice law in England.

What was his attitude the Polish Government at the time of the communists?

As far as he and his colleagues were concerned, that was not a legitimate government and they always hoped that they would be able to return to an independent Poland and set up a democratic government. Unfortunately he did not live to see the changes which have occurred since he died in 1983.

I remember Marek told me that he was in a Russian prison camp. Do you know anything about this?

Marek explained that he was imprisoned but I know few details except that he contracted TB and Typhus while he was there and was lucky to survive these diseases as conditions were very poor. I think he preferred to forget about it.

Here are a few of the photos I have, there are family photos and others from his time in the Government which you may use.







Picture 1: Alfred Urbański, as a younger man in London.

Picture 2: Alfred Urbański Prime Minister of Poland in Exile 1972-1976

Picture 3: Prime Minister Alfred Urbański at a reception at the Office of the Polish Government in Exile.

Picture 4: Prime Minister Alfred Urbański with Polish Exile Government members.

Picture 5: Prime Minister Alfred Urbański with Exile Government members at Polish Government Office.

Picture 6: Prime Minister Alfred Urbański with Government members in London.

Prime Minister Alfred Urbański with Government members in London.

What do you remember of him as a person?

Don't forget that by the time I met him he was 80 years old so I did not know him when he was more active, but he was quite serious and always read the Polish newspaper published in London. He used to enjoy going to the Polish Club in Kensington where he met his friends and he loved to go on holiday to the South of France every summer and soak up the sun.

He was always patriotic and kept his Polish nationality throughout his life, and refused a British Passport although he was offered it. He travelled with Travel Documents as he travelled to many countries, notably Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada where there are large Polish communities, in his capacity as Prime Minister of Poland in Exile.

He is buried in Gunnersbury Cemetery in Chiswick, west London close to the Katyn memorial. Incidentally his wife Janina's first husband was one of the victims of this tragedy.

Thank you very much for giving me a little more information about him.

This Interview with Daphne Urbanska widow of Marek Urbanski, son of Alfred Urbański, Prime Minister of Poland 1972-1976 ( Exiled Government in England ) was conducted by myself Miroslaw Magola on February 05. 2014.